A U M

He whose mind is at ease is possessed of all riches. Is it not the same to one whose foot is enclosed in a shoe, as if the whole surface of the earth were covered with leather?

—The Hitopadesa.

THEOSOPHY

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WORK FOR THEOSOPHY

IN a world so full of destruction, how can one practice brotherhood? In a time of so much evil, how is it possible to refrain from judging others? These and many similar questions are often presented to the theosophist to answer, and, quite naturally, they raise in the mind of the student another question: How can these difficulties be met so that, while stating general principles, the answers given will not be *too* general, and therefore seem without practical relation to immediate issues?

Nearly all the conflicts of history have arisen either from naked cupidity, as in wars of conquest, from the desire to "change" other people to a "better" way of life, as in religious wars, or, as is most frequently the case, from a combination of both of these motives. The reason why men learn so little from the tragedies growing out of the experience of war may be found in this confusion of motive, by which noble reasons are made to justify ignoble actions. The deceptions thus practiced on themselves and others by the protagonists of war make the outcome equally deceiving, which opens the way to similar conflicts in the future. A dishonest peace is worse than an honest war, simply because men can learn from *anything* that is honestly undertaken. Hypocrisy is of all crimes the greatest, because it is the ultimate degradation of man's highest power.

The most evident characteristic of western international relations is the hypocrisy of modern diplomacy. This is a direct result of the vicarious atonement idea which encourages men to believe that profession is more important than practice. Unashamed barbarism is ugly, but a barbarism which pretends to sanctity by wearing a cassock is uglier. All that is holy to human beings has been made the means of inciting men to slay their brothers. Yet holiness has not been won.

After ages of these lies, and the degradation they have brought, is it any wonder that men are now confused as to what is really holy, and what is not? The inevitable karma of dishonestly claiming a true ideal must be the tragedy in which men are found honestly supporting a false one. Whatever the ignorance of our fellows, and the righteousness of ourselves, the lesson of history is plain enough. *Each* nation must be as willing to admit its own mistakes as it is eager to expose the errors of others; as willing to undertake self-discipline as it is to point out the straight and narrow path to other nations. The delusion that any people can be *forced* to be more moral in their national conduct must be exposed as a remnant of the thought that produced the Spanish Inquisition. The only conceivable value in force is the value of restraint. The moment what was begun as restraint assumes the character of *punishment,* then Jehovah is loose on the battlefield once more, in all his immoral glory.

Beings in whom the moral principle is present have to change themselves. The attempt to force other men to do what is "right" can result only in a multiplication of evil effects, which naturally fall into two broad divisions. First, to use compulsion in directing the conduct of others confuses their perception of moral law. The compulsion itself is sure to be regarded as an evil, and that evil attributed to those who impose it. The possibility of self-correction is thereby greatly lessened, for the habit of looking within for the source of human miseries is but little developed in this cycle of human evolution, and when outside compulsion is applied all the lower tendencies are aroused to active reprisal. The one thought becomes to change the "changers." The second class of effects falls to those who apply the force. Insensibly, these men, by their very love of what they think is "right," generate in themselves a hatred for the "bad" people whose wickedness must be stamped out. Ignorance of moral law compounds with righteous indignation to produce the fervor of a religious crusade, and before long the reformers will be found contending, not simply against wickedness, but against irredeemably wicked *men.* Civilization, they say, must be purged of this cancer before the practice of brotherhood, for which *we* stand, can possibly begin.

So are wars justified by those who seek a moral sanction for the use of force. Recently a reviewer, musing on the contents of a new book by General J. F. C. Fuller, *Decisive Battles—Their Influence upon History and Civilization,* observed: "The reader cannot help but be impressed by the fact that to each generation each war has seemed 'different' from the last; to each the new war was glorious; in every age men have been rallied to the standards by the same ancient

shibboleths dressed perhaps in the guise of new expression, modified to fit the concepts of a new day." This historical study of war shows also that "the world's decisive battles have served merely as the punctuation—the periods, let us say—to the end of epochs; many of the battles themselves have been a consequence rather than a cause." (Hanson W. Baldwin in the New York *Times* Book Review, Aug. 18, 1940.) Regarding wars as the effects of causes set in motion over a long period, there can be little doubt that certain historical cycles must inevitably be concluded by the tragedy of armed conflict. So long as desire is uppermost among the motives which energize the great majority, the law governing human relations in the mass will be the law of the elemental world—"unconscious, and acting only according to the laws of its own being." The principle of the elemental world is payment in kind. Meet force with force, hate with hate, and threat with threat.

The actions of nations are statistical results of the collective thought, will and feeling of the people who make them up. When, in the course of time, the accumulated force of these psychic energies reaches the point at which the destructive tendencies overbalance the constructive, war results, as inevitably and as impersonally as the eruption of a volcano or the spread of a forest fire. Wars are not necessary because of what they may accomplish for the future, but because of what was done in the past. Given the causes that make for war, then a better future is impossible until the destructive wave of effects has run its course, but to imagine that those effects are the *cause* of a better future is to succumb to the most transparent deception in all history. The anger followed by contrition and resolve to rage no more is *not* the germ of love and tolerance—it is its opposite.

Wars are but evidence that the animal in man still dominates international relations; diplomacy that ends in war shows only that Manas has been made the slave of selfishness. The whole present system of politics, wrote H. P. B., is built on the oblivion of the rights of humanity at large—equality of right and privilege for all, without distinction of race, color, social position or birth—and upon the most fierce assertion of national selfishness. For two thousand years, from the very beginnings of western civilization, the conduct of national affairs by the rulers of men has been typically of this sort, and even those who have attempted to ameliorate these conditions have been confronted with the apathy, ignorance and even the persecuting spirit of the very masses they tried to serve. Through these centuries, an enormous force of retributive karma has been built up, and although

this Karma is being constantly exhausted, so long as selfishness and hate persist it is also constantly being augmented.

This is easy to understand in principle, but to know the exact relation of all past causes to the present, or to any given moment in history, is possible only to the Adepts. Knowledge of this sort enabled the Teachers of H. P. B. to make the predictions she quoted in the section of *The Secret Doctrine,* "Cyclic Evolution and Karma." Adepts are able to *know* these things; others can only guess. This knowledge, and the actions based on it, are discussed at length by Mr. Judge in *Echoes from the Orient* and elsewhere. The adepts are said to have given help to the Founding Fathers of the American Republic. In a letter signed "Ex-Asiatic," Mr. Judge wrote that his "own unsupported opinion was and is that the American revolution was a just one, started to accomplish a beneficial end, and that the Hindu or Tibetan Mahatmas would not be disgraced by any connection with it." And according to H. P. B., the French Revolution was due to *one* adept—St. Germain—"who brought about the just outbreak among the paupers, and put an end to the selfish tyranny of the French Kings—the 'elect, and the Lord's anointed.' " In *Isis Unveiled,* she spoke of the French Revolution as laying a sure foundation for the rights of individual opinion. "The world was freed from ecclesiastical tyranny by opening an unobstructed path to Napoleon the Great, who had given the deathblow to the Inquisition." (II, 22.)

Was, then, the *Terreur* the work of adepts? Is it to be inferred from such statements that these perfect beings, lovers of mankind, instigate men to *make war* as such? The wars of history have been the inexorable result of causes sown through centuries of hate, oppression and ignorance. They were already *fait accompli,* "things done," on the plane of causation, and regarded by the adepts as nothing more than energies to be guided as one would use electricity or any other impersonal force of nature. What direction is given must depend upon their knowledge of the law of cycles and of the various destinies of races and nations, and as that knowledge involves a perspective of universal history, a vision wholly unknown to the modern world, it follows that this work of the Lodge must be carried out in secret, in order to avoid interference from well-meaning but ignorant men. Otherwise it might be imagined that because Napoleon, for instance, was assisted by the Nirmanakayas, those great beings were on "his side," and that they "changed" sides in contributing to his defeat at Waterloo. Nothing could be further from the truth. As Mr. Judge says in the *Echoes,* these influences were to bring about "results in after years which Napoleon never dreamed of. The fear of what

the world might think of encouraging a monster at a certain point never can deter a sage who sees that the end is best." The ordinary man has not the sight of the Sage; the ordinary man cannot do the Sage's work; hence, the injunction of the Sages to ordinary men:

> The Mahatmas who guard the truth through the ages while nations are decaying, assert that the reaction is sure to come in a relapse into the worst forms of anarchy. The only way to prevent such a relapse is for men really to practice the Universal Brotherhood they are willing to accept with the tongue.

Brotherhood, as taught by Theosophy, means an attitude of mind, the *motive* with which causes are set up. Its practical outcome is brotherly action, brotherly thought and brotherly feeling. No Theosophist, therefore, would of himself ever choose a course of action that would involve his nation in any hate-perpetuating struggle. But if the Karma of past actions is such that war comes, the problem then is no longer whether or not there is to be a war, but, what is the right attitude to be maintained, in spite of the war. It is possible, in the midst of any conflict, to be steadfast in the resolve to set up the kind of causes which will finally produce *real* peace. This is the motive that must be maintained, no matter what course is chosen by nations and races as a whole. If, in guiding the currents of historic destiny, the adepts make the best possible use of bad situations, so also can students fulfill their share of the responsibility by the practice of brotherhood in *their* sphere of influence.

> If the action of one reacts on the lives of all, and this is the true scientific idea, then it is only by all men becoming brothers and all women sisters, and by all practicing in their daily lives true brotherhood and true sisterhood, that the real solidarity, which lies as the root of the elevation of the race, can ever be attained. . . . And if a Brotherhood or even a number of Brotherhoods may not be able to prevent nations from occasionally cutting each other's throats—still unity in thought and action, and philosophical research into the mysteries of being, will always prevent some, while trying to comprehend that which has hitherto remained to them a riddle, from creating additional causes in a world already so full of woe and evil.

The individual who adopts the position represented in these statements by H. P. Blavatsky cannot avoid being involved in situations which have been produced by quite other attitudes of mind. Equally, therefore, the view he takes of those situations will frequently differ in principle from the attitude of other men. Every corrective measure proposed is conceived according to the perception of causes, and the action it recommends must necessarily lie on the plane where the causes are thought to exist. If the great majority are firmly con-

vinced that the causes of war may be eliminated by political and military means, and if, without fear and without selfishness, they proceed to a common action on the basis of this belief, it would then be the veriest futility for anyone to condemn or attempt to alter that course to a "better" one. The right course is the one honestly undertaken, with right motive, according to the light of the knowledge possessed by those who do the choosing. But if, on the other hand, people are of doubtful mind, confused by motives colored by greed, or by selfish fear that possessions may be lost, the true character of these motives should be brought to light.

Actually, however, the problem is not so simple. The people of nations are numbered in millions. At this stage of evolution, there are mixed motives among even the best of men. A general agreement as to what these motives are is seldom possible, nor does such an agreement, when it exists, mean that the common conclusion is a true one. It is more likely to be false. In fact, it is these "agreements," so willingly entered into, about the faults and crimes of others that provide the immediate moral justification for going to war. As individuals, we have to make up our minds on these issues, simply because we are participants in the national Karma, but the judgments so formed are far from decisive; they are simply the inevitable choice between the partial good and the greater or lesser evil which collective determination always presents. It is because of this fact that theosophists as a body take absolutely no part in any national or party politics. In explanation of this policy, Madame Blavatsky wrote in *The Key to Theosophy:*

> Political action must necessarily vary with the circumstances of the time and with the idiosyncrasies of individuals. While from the very nature of their position as Theosophists the members of the T. S. are agreed on the principles of Theosophy, or they would not belong to the society at all, it does not follow that they agree on every subject. As a society they can only act together in matters which are common to all—that is in Theosophy itself; as individuals, each is left perfectly free to follow out his or her particular line of political thought and action, so long as this does not conflict with Theosophical principles or hurt the Theosophical Society.

There is, however, one general test that may be applied in every case:

> Will the proposed action tend to promote that true brotherhood which it is the aim of Theosophy to bring about? No real Theosophist will have much difficulty in applying such a test; once he is satisfied of this, his duty will lie in the direction of forming public opinion. And this can be attained only by inculcating those higher

> and nobler conceptions of public and private duties which lie at the root of all spiritual and material improvement. In every conceivable case he must himself be a centre of spiritual action, and from him and his own daily individual life must radiate those higher spiritual forces which alone can regenerate his fellow-men.

The work of theosophists is to spread the true ethical ideas which each man can practice in his own life. Other men have other work to do, according to their understanding, and the fruit of their labors will be as good as their motive and knowledge, no more, no less. The man who is true to his principles soon finds out whether those principles are right or wrong. Theosophists can hasten the day of understanding for all by giving whole-hearted devotion to *their* principles. So acting, they will become the greatest force for brotherhood the world has ever known. The task of adjusting the Karmic scores of centuries was not the task appointed to their care. For this, they have neither the right nor the wisdom to judge. They cannot decide for anyone except themselves what is the national duty, but they *can* make clear the principles by which alone true duty is determined. The real tragedy of the present is contained in a sentence: "We stand bewildered before the mystery of our own making, and the riddles of life *we will not solve,* and then accuse the great Sphinx of devouring us." Humanity has only one foe—Ignorance, and the fear it generates.

> With right knowledge, or at any rate with a confident conviction that our neighbors will no more work to hurt us than we would think of harming them, the two-thirds of the World's evil would vanish into thin air. Were no man to hurt his brother, Karma-Nemesis would have neither cause to work for, nor weapons to act through.

When we are urged to face "the facts," let us point to *this* fact. The other facts will change, but this one, *never.*

Karmic Law

For man to take the law into his own hands is a sacrilegious presumption. Human Law may use restrictive not punitive measures; but a man who, believing in Karma, still revenges himself and refuses to forgive every injury, thereby rendering good for evil, is a criminal and only hurts himself. As Karma is sure to punish the man who wronged him, by seeking to inflict an additional punishment on his enemy, he, who instead of leaving that punishment to the great Law adds to it his own mite, only begets thereby a cause for the future reward of his own enemy and a future punishment for himself.

—*The Key to Theosophy.*

THE GREAT QUESTIONS

PHILOSOPHY, wrote Plato, begins in wonder. It follows that a man's philosophy will be shaped by the things he chooses to wonder about. This was the opinion of Voltaire, who taught, "Judge of a man by his questions rather than by his answers," and H. P. B. added, "ascertain the motive which prompts the questioner."

Buddha proposed four great questions, the foundations of his religious philosophy. The answers he found became the "four modes of truth." His first question was, Why do men suffer? and he would not stop searching until he had found the answer. Not many men ask this question. Rather there is the universal cry, Why do *I* suffer? Both inquiries are in recognition of the same fact of suffering, yet they are poles apart in point of view. One is seldom more than a mere reflex of sensation, a reaction to the pain men meet while turning on the wheel of change; the other is born from the heart and mind, is evidence of a longing to understand the law itself, not merely to escape from its effects. No man who has asked Buddha's question will ever make a private pact with "God" to ensure his own salvation. Such a God is unthinkable to a lover of his fellows, who would rather be damned a thousand times over if he might thus learn the *cause* of suffering.

The questions asked by empirical science have to do with matter and its motions. They are so proposed that the answers can never contain references to the intelligence behind the movements of bodies, to the purpose in the behavior of beings. Science is not permitted to wonder about these questions, so that, inevitably, the philosophy of science is materialistic. Carried to extremes, the method of science becomes ridiculous to the man of common sense. His materialism is sporadic, a matter of habit, and makes no demands of consistency. Scientific rigor, however, compels its enthusiasts to ask and answer all questions in the spirit of its basic assumptions. Proceeding on the conviction that all law is physical, that it can have no exceptions, the materialistic scientist deliberately refuses to open his mind to ideas that the ordinary man in his unscientific "state of nature" accepts as obvious facts. Scientific materialism, in short, has systematized a portion of the judgments of human nature, rationalized its ignorance, and proclaimed the result the greatest victory of mind over matter known to history. The truth, however, is exactly the reverse.

While his abstract conception of law prevents the materialist from explaining mysterious events as caused by the intervention of a personal deity, the believer in religion has no such inhibition. If a rational cause is not evident, then an irrational one will serve. The religious man is simply a person who requires that *someone* understand what is going on; if not himself, then God. The materialist takes position that if he does not know, then *nobody can.* The range of positions between these two extremes is filled by all those others who rely on the judgments of the personal nature and formulate their questions in personal terms.

The questions asked by Theosophy can be answered by no outside authority, whether of religion or science. They are themselves evidence of the position theosophists endeavor to assume, and the degree of success found by students in realizing the answers is the measure of their ability to sustain this position. Theosophy asks, first, What is the Real, the Unchanging and Permanent, behind all that is and happens in this world? Second, it asks, What is the nature of the changes which are constantly taking place? Under what principle of order do they proceed and by what relation are the things which happened yesterday connected with the events of today and tomorrow? And third, What is the meaning, the purpose or intent in all these movements, changes and strivings? Toward what goal or goals do all things move?

Now, obviously, to answer these questions fully and finally would be to possess all knowledge. Even to ask them represents a measure of what men call "faith"—a confidence that there are answers to be found. How shall the theosophist justify his faith? He cannot, except by considering the idea that there may be those who possess the knowledge he seeks. And then he asks himself: What is the description of the man who is confirmed in knowledge? What would he teach and how would he act? Searching through the lives of those who are known as teachers, studying their words and weighing their actions, he finds that the ones who by all accounts have brought the most of help and hope to their fellows were men who acted on the settled conviction of a continuity of selfhood among all beings. The Real, they said, is that One Self in every living thing. And so, in the choice of his Teachers, the first great question has its answer suggested to the theosophist. But even in this, an unspoken attitude of mind determined the choice. That kind of a teacher was sought because the student had already decided that service to one's fellows is the highest good. Try as we may to analyze them into effects of intellectual decision, there are certain irreducible qualities and atti-

tudes in human beings which must be taken as simply *there,* as part of what we are in essential nature. We cannot get "behind" them. We *feel* our unity with others, and what better evidence could a man have that this unity is a fact?

But men have other feelings. Do these not equally represent "facts"? Unless we can find an adequate explanation for the feeling of separateness also, our rational nature remains unsatisfied, our "knowledge" of unity subject to continuous contradiction. Turning to the Teachers, we find them saying that beings are both united and divided; that their unity accounts for all interdependence and interrelations, and that their division makes possible the individual action we name "becoming." But how, we ask, can things be the same and yet different, both one and many? Up to this point we have understood, but now a great difficulty is presented.

Various answers have been returned to this question. The scientist solves the problem by asserting that the One does not exist. It is a delusion of metaphysics, he says; only the many are real. The subjective idealist tells us that, on the contrary, it is matter and separateness which deceive, and all this array of beings is a phantasm without real existence. But he cannot tell us *why*; no more than the materialist can say why we should ignore the intuition of unity and the presence in the human heart of altruistic love.

These differing opinions confuse our thought. Both materialism and speculative idealism seem a species of madness to the man of common sense. Both do violence to our sense of reason by denying self-evident facts of human experience, and yet, according to this very principle of reason, all human experience, taken together, presents an insoluble problem. What do the teachers say to this?

They say, as might be suspected, that reason is not enough. Some other kind of explanation is necessary to solve this problem. Returning to the origin of these questions, we find that they first arose in an attempt to understand two different kinds of feelings. Is there a higher sort of feeling which might lead to thoughts that would explain our difficulty? The teachers who are no longer troubled by this question must know it, if it exists, and yet, somehow, they cannot tell us about it, or if they tell us, we do not understand. They do say, however, that man has been evolved out of primordial spirit-matter —that his essence is the synthesis of these two—and that the problem is to be solved by acting *as if* we saw in each separate being the presence of the Self in All. So acting, we are taught, the mystery will at last become clear; by trusting the feeling of unity, we shall some day understand the feeling of separateness.

Why should we not have faith in our intuition of unity? Who can propose a better faith? If not by this, then by some other faith will our lives be guided, for no mortal man can exist without faith. No other faith gives so great a promise of bringing us finally to the knowledge possessed by the Teachers, and what other knowledge, were it to become ours, would satisfy the longing of our highest aspirations?

There are only three great questions. Every inquiry that a man can undertake must at last turn his attention to the problems of life, law and being. Answers which stop short of these essential problems cannot be wholly true because they are always confined to only a part of human experience. Sooner or later, the neglected aspects of life rise up in force to condemn as false our partial solutions, our personal answers and our dreams of separate salvation.

The position of the theosophist is defined by the question, What is the meaning of each event, desire, thought or feeling, that enters the sphere of my experience? He makes no claim to *knowing* that meaning beforehand; he says only that it must *have* a meaning. And because the experiences of life are literally meaningless unless they are regarded from the viewpoint of Karma and Reincarnation, he adopts these principles as the tools of his understanding. This is recognition of law.

There is no conceivable experience to which this attitude will not apply. Even if, under the pressure of feelings, a man relaxes for a time his will to understand, he can still learn from this the nature of the forces that keep him in ignorance. He can bring them out in the open, study them as he would the elements of any other problem. Every failure may be taken as evidence of the direction in which success must be sought. This is living by principle, and from it grow the resignation of the philosopher, the courage of the warrior and the knowledge of the Sage.

"Acceptance" of Theosophy has little to do with any of the doctrinal conclusions of the teaching. These are but aids to light the way along the Path. They are given to provide a means of comparing our conclusions from experience with the conclusions of other and wiser men. To become a Theosophist means to take the position of honest inquiry, and to be consistent with all the implications of that position. Only thus can a man discover the meaning of his experience, and only that is knowledge.

QUEEN OF THE SCIENCES

III

THE science of mathematics, until quite recently, has been attributed to the Greeks, who were said to have invented geometry during their Golden Age. The Greeks themselves made no such claim. As Aristotle pointed out, they believed that the science had been introduced into their country by Orpheus.[1] Furthermore, they considered Orpheus himself as merely a transmitter of knowledge which had descended to him through a long line of teachers. As the Florentine Ficinus half correctly explained,

> There were in former times six great Teachers expounding similar doctrines. The first was Zoroaster, the chief of the Magi; the second Hermes Trismegistus, the head of the Egyptian priesthood; Orpheus succeeded Hermes; Aglaophamus was initiated into the sacred Mysteries of Orpheus; Pythagoras was initiated by Aglaophamus, and Plato by Pythagoras. Plato summed up the whole of their wisdom in his Letters.[2]

In reality there were *seven* original "Great Sages" whose offshoots assumed various generic names, according to the country in which they appeared, the name "Orpheus" being one of them. The Greek Orpheus (whose name means "the dark-skinned") has been identified with Arjuna, the friend and pupil of the great Indian Teacher Krishna, who lived some 5000 years ago. When Orpheus brought the science of mathematics from India to Greece, it was not taught publicly but was confined to the Mystery Schools for 2500 years. That is probably why no Greek treatises on mathematics prior to 600 B. C. have come to light. Shortly after that time the Greek Mystery Schools began to degenerate, owing to the State's decision to use the Eleusinian School as a source of income. From that time on Greek students who wanted to learn the higher, philosophical side of mathematics went to Egypt, where they studied with the initiated priests. It was there that Thales of Miletus, the first Greek mathematician of historical times, gained his knowledge. When he returned to Greece after his initiation into the Egyptian Mysteries he defined Number as "a collection of units following the Egyptian view,"[3] and wrote a book on mathematics. For many centuries Thales has been credited with the discovery that the angle in a semicircle is a right angle. But the recent deciphering of certain cuneiform inscrip-

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[1] *Metaphys.*, lib. iii.

[2] *De Immort. Anim.* XVII, i, 386.

[3] Iamblichus, *Nicomachus, Introductio arithmetica.*

tions has proved that the Babylonians were familiar with this proposition 1400 years before Thales was born.[4]

Pythagoras followed the example set by the older mathematician and spent twenty-two years in Egypt studying with the priests who had taught Thales. Afterward he want to Babylonia and India where he acquired the knowledge enabling him to present the famous Theorem which, for many centuries, he was supposed to have discovered. But, as Sir Thomas Heath points out, this Theorem was not original with Pythagoras, as it is found in the *Apastamba-Sulba-Sutra,* and was known in India in the eighth century B. C.[5]

Unfortunately, no complete record of the complex Pythagorean system has been preserved. After the death of their Teacher, the Pythagoreans dispersed through the Mediterranean countries, leaving behind them only scattered fragments of their teachings. Many of these fragments were collected in the eighteenth century by Thomas Taylor and published under the title *The Theoretic Arithmetic of the Pythagoreans.* That book, together with Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras,* contains practically all the reliable information about the Pythagorean system now available. His more profound mathematical theories, imparted orally to his esoteric students who were known as the *mathematikoi,* will, of course, never be known to the world at large.

But even these scattered fragments of his exoteric teachings are enough to prove that the science of Number, as taught in the University of Krotona, had a much more profound meaning than it has today. Pythagoras spoke of Number as "the wisest of all things,"[6] since it contains the key to all the mysteries of nature. In the *Secret Discourse* he declares that "Number is the ruler of forms and ideas." Porphyry, quoting from the Pythagorean Moderatus, says that the numerals of Pythagoras were "hieroglyphic symbols, by means of which he explained ideas concerning the nature of all things."

Plato, who studied in Egypt for thirteen years, and who was also, like Pythagoras, an Initiate of the Mysteries, compiled and published the mathematical theories of Pythagoras in a form more comprehensible to the ordinary man than were the mysterious symbols of the older Sage. He too kept the highest secrets of mathematics for "the few." This is shown in his *Laws* where he speaks of the necessity of a knowledge of mathematics for all freeborn citizens, but admits that a profound knowledge of the subject is not for people in general, but

[4] *Science,* Jan. 13, 1930, R. C. Archibald.
[5] *History of Greek Mathematics.*
[6] Proclus, MSS., *Schol. in Cratylum.*

only for the few.[7] In this, says Thomas Taylor, he was not unique, "for this was the custom of all great ancients; a custom not originating from a wish to become tyrants in knowledge and keep the multitude in ignorance, but from a profound conviction that the sublimest truths are profaned when clearly unfolded to the vulgar."[8]

In the Mystery Schools, upon which both the Pythagorean and Platonic Schools were modelled, the higher forms of learning were preceded and accompanied by a purification of the moral nature, so that the knowledge acquired would not be used for selfish or evil purposes. In those days the "IQ" was moral rather than intellectual. Plato used the five branches of mathematics—arithmetic, plane and solid geometry, music and astronomy—not simply for studies in themselves, but rather as intellectual disciplines which would enable his students to understand philosophy, always insisting that these disciplines tend to awaken that knowledge which is dormant in the soul. Hence Socrates in the *Republic* is made to say that "the eye of the soul, which is blinded and buried by other studies, is resuscitated and excited by the mathematical disciplines." In the seventh book of the *Republic,* where Plato discusses the value of mathematics, he expresses the wish that these disciplines might be established by law, so that those who are to manage the affairs of state would be obliged to study them—especially geometry, as "geometrical knowledge is of that which always is . . . drawing the soul toward truth and becoming productive of a dianoëtic energy adapted to a philosopher."[9]

Plato's idealistic theories were put into a practical form by his friend Archytas of Tarentum, who was the first Greek to write a systematic treatise on mechanics based upon mathematical principles. But where Archytas applied his Teacher's theories in his own particular way without changing them, Aristotle reversed them by starting with particulars instead of universals, thus furnishing the inductive basis (forever banned from pure mathematics) for the experimental sciences.

Euclid, however, was loyal to his predecessors, uniting in one book all their discoveries which he supplemented with some of his own. His very name, which means the "key to happiness," suggests Plato's theory that real knowledge (which is the source of all true happiness) can be best obtained through the mathematical disciplines. Euclid was trained in Athens by some of Plato's pupils, and at the age of thirty was invited to occupy the chair of mathematics in the Uni-

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[7] *Laws* 817 E; 818 A.

[8] *Works of Plato,* translated by Thomas Taylor (1804), I, Intro., lxxxvi.

[9] *Ibid.* I, 371.

versity of Alexandria. His *Elements* was so widely studied by the Platonists that it was called Platonic. It was never translated into Latin, as the Romans were never interested in abstract mathematics, although it is mentioned by Cicero. The first European copy was a translation from the Arabic made by Adelard of Bath in 1120. Since then more than a thousand editions have appeared.

The siege and capture of Syracuse by Marcellus during the second Punic war brought the name of Archimedes to the attention of the world. His Pythagorean tendencies are shown in Schiller's poem:

> To Archimedes came a youth eager for knowledge,
> Teach me, O Master, he said, that art divine
> Which has rendered so noble a service to the lore of the heavens.
> Truly, the sage replied, this art is divine as thou sayest,
> But it was divine before the Cosmos came into being.
> What thou seest as the Cosmos is but the reflection of Deity,
> And the Supreme Deity is *Number Eternal.*

Archimedes studied in Alexandria with Euclid's successors, and is better known for his inventions than his mathematical discoveries, although he slightingly described these inventions as "the diversions of geometry at play."[10] He was killed by a Roman soldier during the sack of Syracuse, being too absorbed in a geometrical problem to notice the entrance of an invader. Upon his tomb was placed the figure of a sphere inscribed within a cylinder, Archimedes considering the discovery of the ratio between them as his greatest mathematical achievement. "Archimedes," says Whitehead, "must rank with Newton, who lived 2000 years later, as one of the founders of mathematical physics."[11]

The Golden Age of Greek geometry ended with Apollonius of Pergamon, whose work on conic sections gained for him the title of "the Geometer." Although only a few fragments of his writings have been preserved, "in those fragments we find the nucleus of the method which Descartes later erected into a principle."[12]

The period of Roman supremacy between the third century B. C. and the third century A. D. was barren as far as mathematics was concerned. As Sir Thomas Heath humorously observes, "No Roman soldier ever lost his life because of his absorption in a geometrical diagram."

In the third century A. D., public interest in abstract mathematics was re-awakened by the Neoplatonists. In that century Porphyry wrote a Commentary on the *Elements* of Euclid, and Iamblichus

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[10] Plutarch, *Marcellus.*

[11] Whitehead, *Introduction to Mathematics.*

[12] Dantzig, *Number, the Language of Science.*

wrote nine books on the Pythagorean theories, seven of which were devoted to the subject of mathematics.

Hypatia, the "girl-philosopher," was even more famous as a mathematician than her father, Theon of Alexandria, who produced an edited version of Euclid. She made the first Commentary on Diophantus and assisted Theon in revising his Commentary on Ptolemy. According to Suidas, she also wrote a Commentary on the astronomical Canon of Ptolemy and the conics of Apollonius of Pergamon. After Hypatia's murder by the Christian mob in 414, all of these manuscripts disappeared.

The thousand-year period of Greek mathematical supremacy was brought to a close by the great Neoplatonist Proclus (410-485 A. D.), whose Commentaries on Plato and Euclid are still considered as models of classical literature. The story of his life, written by his contemporary, Marinus,[19] pictures a poet, mathematician, dialectitian and philosopher who, during the entire seventy-five years of his mortal life, was a model of all the virtues.

Proclus obtained his early education in Alexandria, and at the age of twenty settled in Athens where he studied Neoplatonism with Syrianus and Plutarch and became one of its most prominent exponents. At the death of Syrianus, Proclus was placed at the head of the Neoplatonic School. After a journey to Asia, he began to supplement the Platonic philosophy with "the more ancient rites . . . which the Greeks happened to have neglected during the long interim of time."

Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid* is one of our main sources on the history of geometry, and contains practically all the information we have about Euclid himself. In the Summary he reviews the entire history of Greek geometry up to the time of Euclid, showing that he had before him the original works of Plato, Aristotle, Archimedes and Plotinus, as well as many of the Pythagorean fragments. The *Commentary* opens with two prologues, the first treating of mathematics in its relation to philosophy, the second expounding the geometrical theories of Plato, Aristotle and others.

Space does not permit an exhaustive comment on this extraordinary work. The ordinary student of mathematics who has always believed that the Greeks *invented* the science of geometry will be as interested in one of Proclus' statements as the Theosophical student, who knows that there is nothing new under the sun, and that the arts and sciences have appeared and disappeared again and again under the rise and

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[19] Marinus, *Life of Proclus* (translated by Thomas Taylor).

fall of cycles. For Proclus definitely declares that "the sciences did *not* receive their first constitution in our times, nor in those periods which are known to us from historical tradition, *but have appeared and vanished again and again in other revolutions of the universe.*"

The ordinary student of mathematics will find another statement by Proclus which he might carefully consider and compare with his own experience. "The geometry which is worthy of study," he says, "is that which, at each new theorem, sets up a platform by which one may ascend, and lifts the soul on high, instead of allowing it to sink down and become subservient to the common needs of mortal life."

(*To be concluded*)

Number and Numbers

Pythagoras esteemed the Deity (the Logos) to be the *center of unity* and "Source of Harmony." We say this Deity was the *Logos,* not the MONAD that dwelleth in Solitude and Silence, because Pythagoras taught that UNITY being indivisible is *no number.* And this is also why it was required of the candidate, who applied for admittance into his school, that he should have already studied as a preliminary step, the Sciences of Arithmetic, Astronomy, Geometry and *Music,* held as the four divisions of Mathematics. Again, this explains why the Pythagoreans asserted that the doctrine of Numbers—the chief of all in Esotericism—had been revealed to man by the celestial deities; that the world had been called forth out of Chaos by Sound or Harmony, and constructed according to the principles of musical proportion; that the seven planets which rule the destiny of mortals have a harmonious motion "and intervals corresponding to musical diastemes, rendering various sounds, so perfectly consonant, that they produce the sweetest melody, which is inaudible to us, only by reason of the greatness of the sound, which our ears are incapable of receiving." (*Censorinus.*)

In the Pythagorean Theogony the hierarchies of the heavenly Host and Gods were numbered and expressed numerically. Pythagoras had studied Esoteric Science in India; therefore we find his pupils saying "The monad (the manifested one) is the principle of all things. From the Monad and the indeterminate duad (Chaos), numbers; from numbers, *Points*; from points, *Lines*; from lines, *Superficies*; from superficies, *Solids*; from these, solid Bodies, whose elements are four—Fire, Water, Air, Earth; of all which transmuted (correlated), and totally changed, the world consists." (Diogenes Laertius in *Vit. Pythag.*) —*The Secret Doctrine.*

STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

IN the beginning of evolution, *The Secret Doctrine* tells us, there are three distinct classes of Monads which pursue three distinct lines of evolution. They all start from the plane of Spirit, that state in which all individual consciousness is absorbed in the universal —"absorbed," not lost.

Leaving the highest state, the Monads enter upon hierarchial existence, in which the consciousness of the individual is still latent, because absorbed in the consciousness of its hierarchy. This is true of Egoic consciousness. We might call the Nirvanic state—"Atma-Buddhic" consciousness, and the hierarchical state—"Buddhi-Manasic" consciousness.

From the hierarchical state there is a further descent to individual consciousness, whether that individual consciousness is the consciousness of an elemental, an atom, a cell or any other form of inorganic or organic existence. This individual consciousness may be, or may not be, self-consciousness. Thus, all the Monads were, at the close of the last preceding Manvantara, each and every one reabsorbed in Universal consciousness, so remaining throughout Nirvana. Upon the beginning of this period of Manifestation, the three successive steps of descent from state to state took place.

Because each state of matter has seven sub-states, it follows that so long as there is Manvantaric manifestation there is objectivity and subjectivity on every plane. On the highest plane of manifested substance the matter of that plane is just as objective to our spiritual senses as the matter of this plane is objective to our physical senses. This is equally true on any of the five intervening planes between the highest and the lowest states of substance—on each of them the matter of that plane is as objective to the corresponding psychic or superpsychic senses as gross physical matter is to the waking man.

There is a correspondence between the dreaming and sleeping states of the living man and the Kama-lokic and Devachanic states of the "dead man." It is possible for the living man during sleep to rise higher than the state or plane called Devachan, just because the living man is in conscious possession of all his principles, which is not true of the Devachanee. While we do not recover full memory of that spiritual existence, we bring back *something* every morning; whereas, when the Devachanee is re-born, he has no conscious memory at all of the long life passed in the sleep of Devachan.

Thus, in earth life, we have an opportunity not given to anyone, except an Adept, after death. The "dead" man goes into Kama Loka and then into Devachan, but in neither case is it possible for him to be aware of his existence there. Had he self-consciousness while in those states, he would be either a sorcerer or an Adept; but in our waking human life it is possible for a man to identify consciously the state in which he finds himself. Every time we have the "blues," every time we are despondent, every time we are discouraged or disposed to "kick," whether at ourselves or at others, or to be "conceited, vain of our learning and proud, dear," we are actually in Kama Loka or Avitchi, and we ought to recognize this fact. Equally, when our hearts and our minds are full of courage, confidence, goodwill and the active disposition to serve our fellows, we are on the plane of Buddhi-Manas, the plane where the Masters live and move.

When we become fully conscious of the plane we are on, we shall begin to read the teachings in another way altogether from the way in which they now are "translated" by us. As children we were awake; we participated in life's experiences and read them in a certain way, being then quite sure we saw all there was to learn; yet all around were men and women who were viewing the same experiences in an altogether different light. Then, when we were young men and women, we gained from the experiences of life quite other meanings than those we understood as children.

We need to remember also that just as here we go through distinct states of consciousness, that is, we are awake, half awake, or dreaming, with regard to externalities, so there are corresponding states on all other globes and planes. The *Devachanic* state, therefore, means that on the plane of substance to which the departed Ego goes he is asleep as regards externalities; he is not himself in conscious communication with the life and action of the beings who are awake on that same plane. His consciousness is internal to himself, just as a living man engaged in deep thought or in "day dreaming" is in the midst of the life and action of this world, but is withdrawn from it because his consciousness is turned inward.

The "liberation" which the great scriptures of the world all urge the aspirant to strive for is simply that state or condition of being in which the soul, paradoxically, is no longer the subject of *any* state or condition, but is able to pass from state to state in full consciousness and self-directing power. Then has the soul freed itself from the bonds of karma, the delusions of matter, and entered into true spiritual existence, the life of conscious immortality.

SCIENCE AND THE SECRET DOCTRINE

A Problem in Prophecy

> . . . we are assured by Archaic Scientists that all such geological cataclysms—from the upheaval of oceans, deluges, and shifting of continents, down to the present year's cyclones, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, and even the extraordinary weather and seeming shifting of seasons which perplexes all European and American meteorologists—are due to, and depend on the moon and planets; aye, that even modest and neglected constellations have the greatest influence on the meteorological and cosmical changes, over, and within our earth, . . . Modern Science denies any such influence; archaic Science affirms it. (II, 699.)
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> To conclude on the question of gravity. How can Science presume to know anything certain of it? How can it maintain its position and its hypotheses against those of the Occultists, who see in gravity only sympathy and antipathy, or attraction and repulsion, caused by physical polarity on our terrestrial plane, and by spiritual causes outside of its influence? (I, 513.)
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> —*The Secret Doctrine,* 1888.

FOR some years past, a Canadian civil engineer, Mr. Edgar C. Thrupp, has been developing a method of predicting earthquakes. It appears from correspondence that his theories have been rather definitely formulated, and that they rest upon two main points: (1) the influence of solar, lunar, and planetary conjunctions upon the crustal stresses in the earth; (2) some entirely new views of the operation of gravitation. Mr. Thrupp claims that the Newtonian equations are erroneous and that gravitation exists more in the form of *pressures* than of attractions.

In all likelihood, the real nature of gravitation is beyond formulation by the human mind at its present stage; this may be the reason why H. P. Blavatsky, except for stating that "gravitation is but half a law," of which repulsion is the other half, and, making some enigmatic remarks about the "winds of space," did not go into details. In the case of the present theory, Mr. Thrupp's basic conceptions and their mathematical developments have not yet been disclosed, so that technical analysis must remain a task of the future. As his contacts with the "authorities" in this field have been anything but congenial,—one of them remarking that even if the theory were proved, he still wouldn't believe it,—the Canadian engineer is no doubt steering cautiously for the time being. The issue is nevertheless one

of enormous importance for that portion of the human race which considers it significant whether or not one perishes in an earthquake; even though only a handful as yet know anything about the situation.

Mr. Thrupp's theory consists of two phases: the establishment at long range of danger periods, and the use of instruments which can predict immediate danger at specific spots. The latter method employs apparatus which measures the tilting of the surface of the ground. This, according to the theory, always takes place a few hours before a shock. The validity of the method seems to have been established by an experimenter who was able to give warning of the Imperial Valley earthquake of 1940.

The general accuracy of the predictions was also tested during that year. Mr. Thrupp anticipated danger periods from July 20 to Aug. 5, and from Oct. 20 to Nov. 10. The fringes of such periods are presumed to extend some days beyond either limit. In correspondence with Californians, Mr. Thrupp indicated that Southern California should take special precautions, presumably because of the susceptibility of that region, as the theory itself does not localize the danger. Warnings were spread rather widely by those familiar with Mr. Thrupp's work. Some technical students of Theosophy studied the data rather skeptically, becoming convinced, however, that such precautions as might be practicable were in order.

As it happened, except for a few minor shocks, California rode the crust of the earth serenely through the period, while some of the extraordinary psychological manifestations resulting from publicity given to Mr. Thrupp's predictions lent decided point to the fixed policy of the wise in maintaining great reticence and caution regarding imminent disaster.

Actually, the shocks were happening elsewhere. A partial list follows:

July 22—Slight shocks in South California.

" 25—Tremors in Armenia, Trebizonde to Kelkit. No casualties.

" 26—Great landslides and storms in Antofagasta District of Chile. 100 lives lost in one place.

" 27—St. Louis reported two groups of shocks, continuing for more than three hours, and described as one of the strongest recordings of the year. Estimated to be about 1600 miles due south. That is off the coast of Central America near Salvador. Philadelphia recorded a moderately sharp quake 2000 miles S. W., in fair agreement with the first group noted at St. Louis.

July 29—Several observers in South California recorded a considerable shock estimated to be undersea 3000 miles or more south of California.

" 30—Quake in central plateau of Anatolia, killing 300 and destroying 12 villages. (The strongest record at Kew in July.)

" 31—More shocks in Anatolia.

Aug. 1—Further quakes reported to have increased the toll in Anatolia to over 1000 killed and many more injured, and 14 villages devastated.

" 1—The most violent quake of many years was registered in Italy, and estimated to be somewhere north of Japan. This was confirmed by the arrival of a great tidal wave on the N. W. coast of Hokkaido following the quake, and washing away 1500 fishing boats.

About 75 per cent of the disturbances, and nearly all the violent shocks, happened either underseas or where there was little civilization to be damaged. But as the public was thinking in terms of danger to human life, and in very local terms in California, the acceptance of the theory received a bad setback, and its opponents new ammunition—a situation not unfamiliar, in other lines, to students of the Theosophical movement. It was useless to issue, in that state of affairs, further warnings for California.

Mr. Thrupp's next series of disasters, which could as well have befallen California as any other location, actually struck in Europe. Within, and a little before, the predicted period, from Oct. 20 to Nov. 10, the following seismic events occurred:

Oct. 11—Shocks in Los Angeles.

" 17—Damage in central Italy around Radicofani.

" 22—Medium damage in Rumania.

" 27—Heavy shocks in Costa Rica.

Nov. 10-11—The catastrophic Rumanian earthquakes. A number of lesser tremors occurred in many other parts of the world.

(This list is compiled from newspaper reports, and is doubtless incomplete.)

Mr. Thrupp has a list of further predictions for 1941-42. Special danger periods are: Jan. 20 to Feb. 10, June 25 to July 10; Aug. 20 to Sept. 10; Dec. 15 to Jan. 10, 1942.

It is curious to note that of late the actual possibility of prediction is gaining recognition by a sort of creeping process, working from the outer fringes of science—particularly in that curious "no-

man's land" of pseudo-scientific fiction—toward its center. The many prophecies of Nostradamus and Albertus Magnus are gaining prestige, if only because they seem to bear so clearly on the present world crisis. Meanwhile, H. P. Blavatsky, whose prophecies are more far-reaching, as well as more directly to the point, immediate and verifiable, is carefully and sedulously ignored—as yet. Why? This neglect is in part due to ignorance of her works, for which Theosophists are themselves responsible. But another consideration is that her statements, which come from one almost a living person in the eyes of the historian—statements vitally alive in the growing Movement—are too important, too "dangerous," in their implications. Her prophecies are not the coldly fatalistic announcements of foredoomed events such as given by the historical pessimists, but are coupled with advice as to *causes,* and instructions as to how this thing might be avoided, how that thing may be brought to pass. They are, in short, too *practical* because they demand moral action.

There is no "magic" in true prophecy, whether of Albertus, Nostradamus, or H. P. Blavatsky. Said H. P. B. herself:

> Yet in the prognostication of *such* future events, at any rate, all foretold on the authority of cyclic recurrences, there is no psychic phenomenon involved. It is neither *prevision, nor prophecy*; no more than is the signalling of a comet or star, several years before its appearance. It is simply knowledge and mathematically correct computations, which enable the WISE MEN OF THE EAST to foretell, for instance, that England is on the eve of such or another catastrophe; France, nearing such a point of her cycle, and Europe in general threatened with, or rather; on the eve of, a cataclysm, which her own cycle of racial *Karma has led her* to. The reliability of the information depends, of course, on the acceptation or rejection of the claim for a tremendous period of historical observation. Eastern Initiates maintain that they have preserved records of the racial development and of events of universal import ever since the beginning of the Fourth Race—that which preceded being traditional. (*S. D.* I, 646.)

Probably the most mysterious thing about *true* prophecy is the obstinate unwillingness of the modern mind to investigate the now overwhelming evidence of the truth claimed for archaic wisdom and observation. But what of Karma—the impossibility of any man receiving other than the consequences of his past deeds, in this or other lives; his equal inability to *avoid* such consequences? What good is prophecy if man is already foredoomed?

Knowledge of coming events need not be thought of solely in terms of inescapable destiny. The unseen Karma of a man's past is even as

water held back by a dam. Some day, somehow, in some way, the waters will reach the sea, whether the dam be rent, or the waters be poured forth gradually to give life to the green fields; whether it bursts forth in destruction and ruin, or is channeled productively through waterwheels. Even if the dam is allowed to wear down and vanish gradually over the ages, good Karma and evil Karma are of equal energy and certainty; it is for the Soul whose strong hands grip the levers of the floodgates to order the manner of its use.

A man may be warned that earthquakes threaten. What shall he do? Calmly, he can take the simple precautions dictated by common sense and expert instruction, and await the issue with interest but without fear. Shall he flee the city and die in a traffic accident? Sleep outside and "catch his death of cold"? Neglect his duties and worry himself into nervous prostration? Quite certainly, if a series of danger-points such as have been given were universally and seriously received, catastrophic dislocations of normal living would occur, which might be much more serious than any probable destruction by the quakes themselves. Ignorance of cycles is thus a natural protection against psychological disaster, so long as the race mind remains in its present irrational and unbalanced state.

If a European be warned that disaster is fast overtaking Europe, what shall he do? Fix himself a safe nest in a foreign land—and perhaps die at sea reaching it? Sell European securities "short"—and too soon? Or set to work among his people to *teach* them the necessary consequences of actions and policies, himself in no way reluctant to share the Karma—which is his—of those among whom he was born? Or shall he laugh, as Europe once laughed at H. P. B., the "impostor"? As Europe in most part still would laugh, were there now room on its face for aught but tears!

Karma operates to produce cataclysms of nature by concatenation through the mental and astral planes of being. A cataclysm may be traced to an immediate physical cause such as internal fire and atmospheric disturbance, but these have been brought on by the disturbance created through the dynamic power of human thought.

Egos who have no Karmic connection with a portion of the globe where a cataclysm is coming on are kept without the latter's operation in two ways: (*a*) by repulsion acting on their inner nature; and (*b*) by being called and warned by those who watch the progress of the world. —*Aphorisms on Karma.*

DISPASSION

WHEN something out of the ordinary occurs, the tendency of human nature is to be attracted to one of two poles—extreme sorrow or extreme pleasure. Like powerful magnets attracting iron, the great opposites draw to themselves the lower nature of man, henceforth determining its angle of perception. Few there are who in any situation refuse to become the iron typical of this age. The freedom from attraction to objects of sense that the Krishna within urges upon the involved Arjuna cannot be attained unless a reflective dispassion is maintained before every issue the searcher for truth meets. The partiality shown by hate or attachment, fear or pride, will at once throw a cloud between the Light within and the darkness without. Oscillating between the attraction of the two great poles of delusion, a man may go through many incarnations in ignorance of his true purpose in life.

How can the iron, attracted by any and every magnetic current, be changed to "kingly gold," which is not attracted by any outside magnet, but which glows and radiates to all the white light of the Spirit? The alchemical transmutation has been performed in the past many times and is possible in the future for every spark of human nature. What is needed, once the desire is felt to effect a change, is the *will* to carry through. Bringing the will into play is something each man must do for himself.

The application of the principle of dispassion to present-day problems means not becoming involved in any events, no matter how strong the demands of the personal nature. It is easy to take sides without an appreciation of the issues involved. Strong men only can see events as workings of karmic law, just and unerring. Their efforts are always to set new and better causes in motion. The event of the day is like the cross-section of a prism, the infinite number of cross-sections below being the past and those above being the future. Looking at the prism as a whole, past and future are seen as one continuous reality, and the present as but a momentary phase. What reason, then, is there for approaching anything from the narrow, partial view of the present? The man of dispassion sees things "whole," and is not deluded by the separation in time of cause and effect. Only by knowledge of law can men shape events toward a better future for all.

YOUTH-COMPANIONS' FORUM

ARE *all worlds man-bearing? Could there be a system so low that mind-beings would not exist thereon? If so, how would their evolution be carried on?*

(*a*) No globe is possible except in connection with man, the living soul of any world. "Man-bearing" is sometimes used to describe a condition like that of our present relation with matter; every world or "globe is a septenary chain of worlds" and "these are, were, or will be 'man-bearing.' " (*The Secret Doctrine* II, 699.)

The development of the Earth depends at all times upon mind-beings, because the responsibility of man as the architect, the builder and the renovator of the universe, never ceases. It has been well put that "Man, considered as a spiritual host, is present at the birth of the world from the matrix of abstract space." At some stages the Earth's condition is such that human beings live on it as we do now, working actively in matter, but there have been times when the Earth was in a gaseous state and our connection with it was like that of the soul with the unborn child—just as real, but different. Our planet has had many states and will have many more in which our connection will vary.

The principle involved in answering this question is that of analogy. Man's relation to the formation of his body gives the key to his relation to the formation of worlds. Only by understanding himself can he understand the universe. As Mr. Crosbie wrote:

> This idea presents the fact that the real Man in whatever condition he may be existing, whether asleep or awake, whether in a physical body during his lifetime, or whether in another form of body after death or before birth, or before the existence of this planet or this solar system—that this real Man was the same Perceiver, then as now, the same Soul all the time; the Creator of all the conditions that have arisen; the *intelligent* Creator of this universe, in connection with all the beings below him and all the beings above him. (*Friendly Philosopher,* 343.)

(*b*) In the *Ocean* Mr. Judge, writing of the evolution of a world, says:

> The plan comes first in the universal mind, after which the astral model or basis is made, and when that astral model is completed, the whole process is gone over so as to condense the matter up to the middle of the Fourth Round. Subsequent to that, which is our future, the whole mass is spiritualized with full consciousness and the entire body of globes raised up to a higher plane of development (p. 28).

"Man-bearing" applies to globes or worlds in which mind-beings are involved. Now if every plan for a cycle of evolution "comes first in the universal mind," then every world is an expression or manifestation of mind, and therefore, of mind-beings. For the purpose of this question, the activities of "mind" may be regarded from two aspects, first, as memory; second, as imagination. Generally speaking, the cycle of manifestation begins with the activity of memory. During Pralaya,

> The previous objective Universe has dissolved into its one primal and eternal cause, and is, so to say, held in solution in space, to differentiate again and crystallize out anew at the following Manvantaric dawn, which is the commencement of a new "Day" or new activity of Brahmâ—the symbol of the Universe (*S. D.* I, 41).

The Nature which "unaided fails" is the Nature which rebuilds according to the memory of an established pattern, but which cannot originate. Creative activity belongs to Manasic beings, the reincarnating egos, that take up the work of further evolution at the point where the creative beings of the former cycle, who were themselves, left off. This point is reached at the middle of the Fourth Round, when the reproduction or "crystallizing out" of past achievement is complete. Then new achievement begins. As Mr. Judge says, "the force at work and determining the great cycle is that of man himself considered as a spiritual being; when he is done using the globe he leaves it, and then with him goes out the force holding all together." In one of his "Hidden Hints in the Secret Doctrine" articles, Mr. Judge explains this in another way:

> It is still altogether too customary for students to separate the Monads, first from the globes and then from the beings thereon. They cannot be thus divided off. All the globes and their objects are and ever will be monads in stages of evolution, just as we who now study the question are monads ourselves in other stages. The false notion should at once be discarded that there was a time when there were no monads on the globe but that there was here in waiting this ball of earth coming from no one knows where, and that later on monads arrived to occupy it.
>
> If we carry out the principle laid down, then the globe is the creation of the monad; and when the globe is evolved, at once monads needing experience enter into its corporeality to continue its existence. These later monads are those far behind in the race who will, in some succeeding period of evolution, be in a position to evolve on their own account some new globe in ages yet far distant, for the carrying on of the same process eternally. For, as a material object cannot spring out of nothing, neither can education or knowledge or ability

> to plan arise out of nothing, but must be based upon and flow from some prior experience or education. So it must be that even now there are monads encased in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms which have never been farther than that, and will during the remainder of the race evolution continue their education in those lower kingdoms until their time shall come when, the door opening for their exit, they will pass out and higher to make room for others (THEOSOPHY II, 157-8).

For there to be the individual evolution of a planet, the presence of the principle of individuality is required—*Manas*. A system which is "so low" as not to provide the field for Manasic activity could not be a "system" at all, but would be simply the lower principles of a world in its embryonic stages. A world without men would be like a body without a soul. Body is the vehicle and effect of soul; planets are the objective manifestations of indwelling creative intelligence—man.

Botanists say that lichens, which are sometimes referred to as the primitive form of vegetable life, are not simple plants, but a combination of fungi and algae working together in close symbiotic relationship. Why should plant evolution start with complexity?

The questioner will not gain an understanding of plant evolution simply by a study of complexity. The ants follow a very complex system of inter-relationship. Few modern cities or nations have so complex a social system as the bees and, even in the organization of the human form, complexity does not indicate where or in what direction human progress lies. The seventh race, it is said, will have the kind of forms used by the first race, and this will not be retrogression because the seventh race will be physically spiritualized. (*Isis* I, 298.)

Symbiosis is a comparatively new word for a mutually advantageous relation such as exists between bees and the many flowers for which they carry pollen, and for the connection between some parasites and their hosts. We need to realize with the author of *The Flowering Earth,* Donald Culross Peattie, that "the whole long vital experiment on earth is symbiotic by chains of cause and relation past glib explaining."

Theosophy teaches that man himself set the pattern. In bygone ages the Soul plunged into the sea of matter for the express purpose of organizing the chaotic powers of nature. Its aim was to consolidate the powers of nature into a path of positive evolution, and in this there is a two-fold purpose. The Soul in helping nature learns or comes to a truer realization of the Self. Man, immersed in matter, does not consciously remember that ancient purpose, but on every

hand he may see evidence of this ancient symbiotic fellowship which he himself established. He may see it in the relationship between the Ego and the cells of the body as well as in the lichen.

As to the question of complexity at the start of plant evolution, it should be remembered that long before there were any "physical plants," there was the astral evolution of vegetable types, which later were precipitated into gross material life to continue their development on this plane. In point of fact, a literal "simplicity" will nowhere be found in this world of complete differentiation.

The Genius of Life

If there is any living thing which might explain to us the mystery beyond this life, it should be seeds. . . . It will depart, this power we call life, before our saddening eyes have ever perceived it. And it will return again, in its eternal rhythm, to the seed and to the child, the great arising out of the small, the immortal from the passing. . . .

Life is no formula, nor a pretty annex to the exact sciences. It avails itself of mathematical, physical, and chemical systems; it does not transgress their laws. But, law-obedient, employing every resource of the inorganic world, it is yet, throughout its length and breadth, as individualistic, versatile, complex, and imaginative as creative genius can be. . . .

The mathematical basis of beauty invests the whole plant. Leaves, in their arrangement around a stem, serve themselves of exact fractions, always specific to the particular kind of plant in hand. Pollen grains, in basic form as well as in their sometimes complex planes, are geometrical figures, often exactly like abstract crystalline shapes. For many minds this botanical numerology, this dainty sort of engineering is so complete a satisfaction that their curiosity goes little further. Others see at this point, as at no other, a relationship of the lilies of the field to the stars in their courses. . . . Life turns out to be what matter is everywhere—whether in the interior of the sun or at the center of the earth—an electromagnetic system, an arrangement of matter in terms of force. And if it should occur to you that here protoplasm, with mortal Adamite finger, touches the finger of universal and immortal power, science will not gainsay you.

—Donald Culross Peattie, *The Flowering Earth.*

MODERN NEEDS IN LITERATURE

IN a recent issue of *Time,* the author of a new biography of Feodor Dostoevsky is quoted as having called the great Russian novelist an "engineer of souls." While this characterization is just, it is doubtful that any modern critic fully appreciates the extraordinary insight into human character which Dostoevsky possessed. This quality enabled him to launch a tidal wave of social reforms in Russia, as H. P. Blavatsky makes clear in her discussion of the relation between literature and human progress. (See "The Tidal Wave," THEOSOPHY XXVII, 496.) "The world," she wrote, "needs a dozen such others as Dostoevsky," for he, among all the writers of his time, had the power to reach the heart of every man, whatever his class or position, and to stir to action many who lived in ignorance of the suffering all about them.

Dostoevsky pursued his career in an epoch of decisive historical importance, when there was both opportunity and inclination to review and evaluate the social developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His first story, published in 1846, dealt unsparingly with the misery of the Russian peasants and the hopeless state of the poor in the cities. The power of his tales has been expressed in a sentence: "A magnetic sympathy that impels the reader to identify himself with characters often sordid or repulsive, dwelling in an atmosphere of misery." This capacity to make men see themselves in others is actually an *occult* power, the tool of genius. By it Dostoevsky opened the eyes of his readers to the Theosophical vision —he gave the perspective of Brotherhood.

Science was to bring the world material unity during the last century, though whether the removal of the barriers of distance by modern transportation would result in a similar unity of understanding among the nations of the world remained to be seen. The spread of true internationalism depended in large part on the ability of writers, whose task it was to spread ideas, to speak the language of a common humanity. Lafcadio Hearn, who himself contributed so much to the unity of East and West, pays fitting tribute to the group of Russian authors, among them Dostoevsky, who furthered the cause of brotherhood among nations. The following passage is taken from one of Hearn's lectures published in *Talks to Writers:*

> After having read those wonderful books [by Dostoevesky, Tolstoy, Gogol, Pushkin, and Kropotkin], written with a simple strength of which we have no parallel example in western literature, except

> the work of a few Scandinavian writers, the great nations of the West could no longer think of Russians as a people having no kinship with them. Those books proved that the human heart felt and loved and suffered in Russia just as in England, or France, or Germany; but they also taught something about the peculiar and very great virtues of the Russian people, the Russian masses—their infinite patience, their courage, their loyalty, and their great faith. For, though we could not call these pictures of life beautiful (many of them are very terrible, very cruel), there is much of what is beautiful in human nature to be read between the lines (p. 221).

For the student of H. P. Blavatsky, the works of Dostoevsky bear an individual as well as historical significance of great import. One who is seeking better to know himself will find in the works of Dostoevsky a great aid to intelligent revaluation of his conduct and ideals.

Modern psychology places little reliance on the method of introspection as a means to knowledge of the inner man, and completely ignores its ethical significance. But if, indeed, psychology be regarded as the science of the soul, it is only through careful and frequent analysis of one's underlying feelings, motives, recurring impressions and impulses that "the kingdom of heaven," individual and social, may be won. Psychologists pretend to collaborate with sociologists in the reconstruction of our social order, yet are often so blind as not to see that the prerequisite for any such program is *individual* reconstruction of ideals and objectives. It is with this need of every human being in view that we can come to appreciate the immense moral value of great novels. In the understanding and reflective man they work a *catharsis* of the emotions. The novels of Dostoevsky terrify rather than please, create consternation rather than satisfaction, plunge their readers into depths of uncertainty, and yet their very power brings the reader face to face with himself. From the standpoint of Theosophy, every soul must pass through all the complexities of earthly experience, become the master of every feeling, the knower of every idea. The true function of the novel, so thoroughly understood by Dostoevsky, is to trace the ways of Karma; it should offer an impersonal spectacle of life itself, yielding to the thoughtful the results of direct experience.

Much of what we call literature deals with the superficialities of existence, as in the case of most popular novels of today; but literature can also reveal the inner existence of heart and mind, the struggles of the soul. The fundamentals of living, the equations of good and evil which underlie the "moral" of all stories, are the true inspiration of great literature.

For the most part, modern novels emphasize elements designed to entertain or please. Dostoevsky had not these purposes. He fathomed the depths of both the human personal soul and those of the impersonal being within. No one who reads and reflects upon *The Idiot, Crime and Punishment,* or *The Brothers Karamazov,* can fail to see himself, in some aspect of his variegated and contradictory personality, appearing in these pages. Dostoevsky's characters are "types" in the truest sense; like Shakespeare's characters, they are universal, each one depicting the particular domination of certain human strengths and weaknesses, while, as a substratum behind all this, each bears a common impress.

Good fiction should present basic phases of the human struggle in the light of a general perspective, yet in Western literature we find little more than repetition of certain designs, which, although not unimportant, lose all their significance when separated from the meaning of the whole. The typical "happy ending" of the modern love story is an instance of this. By implication, no other issue exists for the lovers except their love for each other. The ideal proposed by such tales is the realization of a devachanic dream—a literal oblivion from the moral point of view, with forgetfulness of all human suffering. Love stories, of course, are not "bad," but they are essentially trivial and morally vacuous. People whose minds are filled with this romantic escapism are not likely to rise to greater things.

Fiction, to be of value, should comprehend the real horizons of human life, and awake, not drug, the reader. Who today stands ready to fulfill this need as did Dostoevsky? Modern authors who deal in social criticism seldom rise above a mere recital of human degradation. Aldous Huxley, conceded to be one of the most brilliant of contemporary novelists, may be taken as an instance. As one critic has remarked, he regards his characters with "fascinated loathing." A nameless curse haunts their lives; they are not simply evil, but creatures the reader cannot imagine as ever having been human beings. Even the spokesmen of the author lack reality. In *After Many a Summer,* his Mr. Propter discourses philosophically, but he has no heart. He is Mr. Huxley's dialectical machine. Propter's nerveless rationalism only serves as a pale background to the studied sensuality which becomes the dominant tone of the book. The author of *Ends and Means* seems unable to apply to his fiction the principle he so ably defended in that work. *After Many a Summer* is not a means to social reform, but a formula for moral revulsion.

The philosophy of hedonism—"eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die"—emerges naturally in the modern transition from other-worldliness to worldliness. Novelists, impressionable and psychic, wasted little time in appropriating materialistic evolutionary and biological theories for construction of a new perspective on human objectives and ideals. The theories of Darwin contained revolutionary implications for human conduct, or, at least, so thought many writers of the early 1900's. During this period Stephen Crane carried over to America much of the style and implied philosophy which characterized the works of Emile Zola in France. Man, at the touch of his pen, became a helpless animal, driven by his instincts and accidental concatenations of events. Crane's novels became tremendously popular, despite their emphasis of the "clutch of circumstance." Then came the more positive thesis of Frank Norris and Jack London, featuring "brute instinct triumphant." Fictional "philosophy" had managed to catch up with the implications of materialistic theory in science—the struggle to "survive." The "climate of opinion" of the intellectuals, with few exceptions, had become the outlook of the noveltist. Rampant individualism was now a mandate of Nature. Harry Hartwick, author of *The Foreground of American Fiction,* remarks:

> *Laissez faire* is the litmus paper of modern thought; and from his tendency to glorify or stigmatize this concept, the philosophical bias of every recent American novelist may be judged. Reduced to lowest terms, it means: *Let Nature take its course, and obey the instincts that Nature has presented to man for his guidance. Ideals of human conduct are only the toys of an ignorant and puny biped, his naïve interpretations of a scheme too big and dark for him to decipher. Nature alone knows what is best for man, having created him. Therefore he must resign himself to its leadership, to impulse rather than wisdom, in order not to go astray* (p. 3).

The novelist writing in this spirit no longer exploited man's sinful deviations from conventional morality. His characters engaged in struggle against the elements of nature, and happiness was found by unleashing "primal instincts." The exciting thesis that all men are brutes thinly covered with a layer of civilized taboos gave sanction to the Nietzschean ethic that "might is right." As Hartwick says:

> In this chameleon world from which God, its previous yardstick, has been removed, life can be neither good nor evil in any moral sense. To many it is an unfriendly universe, ruled by "the blind dicings of fate," where we are forced to dig our own graves and water the seeds of our eventual demise. Permanence has departed,

> and all promise of glory. Impressions stream in through his sense, and compel the naturalist to flow along with them. Self-restraint has made way in him for self-defense; and no longer under ethical obligations to his neighbors or God, he soon finds himself drifting upon a river of sensations, untamed, and content to live accidentally in an accidental world (p. 20).

Early in the twentieth century a new element began to color the simple materialism portrayed by Crane, Norris, London and Dreiser. The theories of Sigmund Freud were widely discussed, making their first popular appearance in the works of Sherwood Anderson. Although the note struck by psychoanalysis was repellent to the American public before the World War, this objection died during the frenzied post-war period and Mr. Anderson's graphic pen made Freud attractive. The implications of the new outlook were plain. "You are obsessed with inhibitions: Get rid of them." Further, it drove the concept of soul from its last stronghold, substituting a bundle of sensations and subconscious psychic impressions, thus completing the conquest of materialism. Freud's emphasis on sex lent "scientific" glamor to a subject that had been more or less forbidden and popular writers informed the public that the "sins" of yesterday had now become virtues in the brave new world. The cycle of "scientific" sensuality was in full swing.

In time, however, the reading public tired of this degradation of mind. Opportunity then existed for a great writer such as Dostoevsky to peer beneath the superficialities of materialistic philosophy and awaken the slumbering soul of man, but unfortunately, none such as the great Russian was forthcoming. Instead, a considerable crop of escapists made their way into the foreground of American fiction, proving that after looking materialism in the eye for some time the great American public didn't like what it saw and wanted something different, something more hopeful. From the false and ugly, popular taste turned to the merely "pretty." The searching social criticism of Sinclair, Lewis, and Dos Passos could not yet be appreciated. Literature reverted to the philosophy of "art for art's sake." Cabell, Morley and Hergesheimer turned their backs on reality and built an effete world of fancy, in which the patterns of life would be at least intriguing. Discussing Hergesheimer, Mr. Hartwick delivers a penetrating and sufficient criticism which has application to a score of writers:

> Prose in his [Hergesheimer's] books has degenerated into a species of adjectivitis, a pure "torrent of mobile chimeras," with a purpose that seems to be largely decorative. His desire to escape from an empty world has led him into an even emptier one, marked not by

> degrees of good and evil but by gradations of sensory poignance. In evading the real he has arrived at the theatrical, not the unreal or ideal. The cardboard stage he has set for his drama has absorbed the actors. Though charming, it lacks the vivifying presence of a moral symbolism. His beauty does not penetrate beyond the eye, and has nothing to say to the heart or mind, no carrying power. Paint does not turn into spirit on his canvas; it remains a thin film of gorgeous but inanimate color, uninhabited by that vital mingling of sense and sensation so necessary to important art. And the absence of this supreme coalition in Hergesheimer's work represents his failure as a novelist. For true art is the minister that joins these contradictions in holy wedlock, and harmonizes body and soul. As sterile as an ethics that is not related to esthetics is a beauty that is not related to ethics (p. 199).

In the concluding sentences of this passage, Mr. Hartwick states the only true criterion for art of all types and all times. To judge a piece of writing by the measure of its fulfillment of what the author set out to do is not enough. There must be the further query: Has the author tried to do something worth while? Lafcadio Hearn, perhaps the most lucid of essayists on the problems of esthetics, has set the same standard of criticism:

> I do not know that any art which has existed in the past could be called the highest possible. The highest possible ought to be, I think, one that treats of ethical ideals, not physical ideals, and of which the effect should be a purely moral enthusiasm. Sculpture, painting, music, — these arts can never, I imagine, attempt the highest art in the sense that I mean. But drama, poetry, great romance or fiction, in other words, great literature, may attempt the supreme, and very probably will do so at some future time. (*Talks to Writers,* pp. 154-4.)

During the past few years a vogue of ultra-realism has swept the American continent, replacing the escapism of the stylists and surpassing all former realists in unashamed frankness. John Steinbeck is the apostle of the new era, raised to heights of popularity by his *Grapes of Wrath.* Mr. Steinbeck's sincerity and moral purpose are not to be doubted, but the important question remains: What positive ideal is held out to readers? Where are the good, the true and the beautiful to be sought? A book written so largely in the gross jargon of animalism is deeply offensive to the sensibilities of the reader and tends to coarsen his mental life. Mr. Steinbeck's searing description of the consequences of economic injustice may be accurate in its presentation of facts, but what of the vengeful spirit generated? The emotional desire to help, finding no constructive outlet, may lead only to hatred of political and industrial leaders, a feeling that

can play a large part in bringing about a destructive revolution. Mr. Steinbeck's characters find no antidote to their empty, hopeless lives, because the author himself sees no solution. The reader is left with the impression that these stricken human beings must suffer their present crudities of living until some change in the "system" is effected, presumably by a popular uprising. This picture is leavened, it is true, by the glimpses of inextinguishable brotherliness and kindliness in the attitude of man toward man, which clear the author of the charge that he is simply a propagandist of red revolution. He fails, however, to see the larger meaning of these qualities, that the true happiness of men must come from their further development in dedication to moral ideals and in the discovery of new inner resources. The direction of unsatisfied energies must be changed. A transformation in attitude must precede all lasting reforms of the external social order, and in the interim, before such enlightened changes are made, men *can* choose their own spiritual and moral life, whatever the conditions that oppress them.

Dostoevsky is the true theosophist of the novel, and it is well to return to his methods and motives after surveying more recent types of fiction. The great Russian was no armchair philosopher. His life was one of unspeakable suffering from poverty, sickness and persecution—he spent years in Siberia as a political exile—and yet he possessed the clarity of vision which made him the "engineer of human souls" rather than a prophet of class or political hatreds. No shadow of personal resentment or revenge mars his work. He was not a hater, but a lover, of his fellows. If such writers as Dostoevsky are to be forthcoming, let us have them and have them quickly, for the disorganized and contradictory energies of the modern world need the orientation which can only come from demonstration that man has two lives, an inner existence in soul as well as an outer life of personal suffering and social conflict, and that the life of soul is all-important.

SOUL AND FORM

It is a proof of the shallowness of the doctrine of beauty, as it lies in the minds of our amateurs, that men seem to have lost the perception of the instant dependence of form upon soul.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

ON THE LOOKOUT

The Crime of Criticism

Just one year ago, before preparation for war had become a national fever in America, an article in *Harper's* described in some detail the practical effect of the Espionage Act of 1917 on the free institutions of the American republic. The writers, Lucille B. Milner and Groff Conklin, show how the provisions of this law were made to suspend the constitutional right of freedom of speech and press, saying in summary:

> Over half of the nearly two thousand prosecutions, and a similar proportion of the hundred and more censorship cases brought under the Espionage Act, were conducted under the authority of these 1917 provisions of the Act. Individuals, organizations, and publications alike were prosecuted on the grounds of "intent" to persuade to disloyalty. In most cases the actual substance of the speech or literature involved criticism of the government, the war's aims, or the draft, rather than any concrete or proven interference with the operation of the war. In one case a man was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment for stating his belief that the Supreme Court would declare the Draft Act unconstitutional. ("Censorship in Wartime," *Harper's,* January, 1940.)

History Is "Seditious"

In 1918, the Act was "strengthened" to include ten new offenses. As interpreted by the courts, it "permitted prosecution for the saying or writing of any words which had even the remotest tendency to persuade to sedition as defined under the Act. The judges held that no immediate intent to persuade and no evidence of success in the persuasion had to be proved." It became possible, under this conception of "sedition," for an American motion picture producer to be sentenced to ten years in the federal penitentiary because he had made a film, completed before war broke out, which in one scene showed the famous "Wyoming Massacre," an incident of the Revolutionary War revealing that brutality had been practiced by the British redcoats. The producer actually served three years in prison before his sentence was commuted. Although the 1918 law was repealed in 1921, the 1917 Espionage Act is still on the books, having application whenever the United States is at war.

Conscientious Objectors

In *Harper's* for October, 1939, the same writers reviewed the subject of "Conscience in Wartime." They told how some American conscientious objectors to the last war were "beaten, subjected to

hour-long, icy-cold showers directly in the face, and occasionally actual physical maimings." Three men, two of them being the peace-loving Mennonite Hofer brothers, died of such mistreatment. Another committed suicide, and still another went insane. The details of these official crimes are given in the *Pacifist Handbook,* recently published under religious auspices and available at the Friends Service Committee headquarters in Philadelphia. No provision was made in the 1917 Draft Law for the non-sectarian conscientious objector, although an order issued by the President in 1918 finally recognized that men who were not followers of organized religion might have consciences. According to this article, "some of the most steadfast and unwavering men 'scrupulous against war' " were among the objectors on rational and political grounds. The treatment of the 504 men who refused any alternative to combatant service was severe. Seventeen death sentences were meted out to objectors whose scruples the army refused to allow. While these sentences were later commuted, they show what was then the attitude of some officers of the military courts. Other sentences included life imprisonment, and terms ranging from three to ninety-nine years. Of the 450 men so imprisoned, the last one to gain his freedom was released two years after the Armistice was signed.

To Save Democracy?

Under the present draft law, the forms to be filled out by conscientious objectors are obviously designed to accommodate those who object to war on sectarian grounds. Small provision is made for the objector whose philosophical principles lead him to take a stand against war. It remains to be seen how the draft boards will regard men who belong in this category. Already, however, an official attitude has been taken toward those who refuse to register. On Nov. 14, in New York, eight theological students were sentenced to serve a year and a day in the federal penitentiary because they were unwilling to submit their names even as potential draftees under the present act. The *Christian Century* concludes its editorial comment with these words:

> Women and girls in the crowded court room wept, and an elderly man said, loud enough to be heard in the silence, "This sentence is another triumph for Hitler." As the New York *Times* remarked editorially, these young men "are certainly not criminals." They have broken a law, but they broke it to oppose what they believe to be a tidal wave toward war and fascism. They believe that registration has no meaning except in relation to conscription, and conscription to be senseless except as preparation for war. They believe that

in refusing to take the first step toward war asked of them they have resisted the war system itself. Others may not agree with them, but they will not forget the picture of what happened in that court room. Here again, as so many times in history, the passage of time will change the roles. Criminality on trial steps down, and the law finds itself in the dock. The prosecutor becomes an object of pity. The judge is himself judged. And the nation which locks within high walls men whose only crime is that they try to obey God rather than men, itself becomes a prison until they go free.

The Courage of Conviction

It may be said that these eight young men were "unreasonable" in refusing to use the means provided by the draft law to record their conscientious objections. Certain it is that they did not choose the "easy" way to give expression to their convictions. Theirs was obviously no mere personal stand, but a determination to show their feeling of moral repugnance for a national policy which they regard as destructive of the highest ideals of their religion. Eleven other divinity students, after registering, immediately resigned from Union Theological Seminary in order to meet the test of conscientious objection without the special exemption afforded to those studying to be ministers. This is an application of the democratic principle in its sense of *voluntary* equality.

The Right Not To Kill

To deny the moral right of these men to obey their conscience is to make like condemnation of Thoreau, who went to jail rather than pay taxes to support the Mexican War. The issue raised by these events is not whether the draft law is "right" or "wrong," but whether under democratic government citizens have the right to protest against laws which violate their moral principles. Of what value are the "rights" that democracy is supposed to secure for members of minority groups, if the right *not to kill* or aid others in killing be denied to them? The conscientious objector is simply a man who feels himself morally bound to revolt against a condition which is briefly and accurately stated by Norman Angell in his *Peace and the Plain Man.* He wrote:

> In war time we discovered that neither a man's life nor his conscience are his own. That they too belong to the state. If the state commands a man to walk to certain death, to death he walks. More. If it commands him to kill, disembowel, dismember and torture women and children, he does these things. . . . It all actually happened in the last war (p. 56).

TOWARD A NEW ORDER

In *Antioch Notes* for November, 1940, Arthur E. Morgan discusses the subject of conscientious objection to war, bringing to light truths that should be pondered by every lover of freedom and of mankind. He wrote in part:

> International relations rest on force, but must come to depend on good will, or civilization may be destroyed. The world is not ready for the new order, but never will be unless its building is commenced, and progresses to gradual replacement of the old. The conscientious objector is trying to take first steps to that end. . . .
>
> The conscientious objector believes that war, because of its methods, and because of its effects on the temper and character of men, prevents achievement of the legitimate ends it seeks. After the World War he saw military victory, as usual, used to impose inequity and to sow seeds of new war. He notes that every people believes that its use of force is to protect it against force, or to remove injustice. He believes that while war has long been a human habit, in the course of social evolution it must be replaced by reliance on good will as the only sound basis for society, and that men will respond to good will that has become plainly evident to them. He believes that this change will not come suddenly, and that the example of many individuals persistently acting in good will, for a long period, will be necessary before nations will be ready to rely on good will as national policy.

NECESSARY STEPS

> He believes that before the increase of reliance on good will has brought disarmament, it will have so affected public policy that absolute sovereignty, economic barriers, and inequities will be replaced by mutual consideration and fair dealing, that ethical principles will apply between nations, and that causes of war will be largely removed. He believes his best contribution to this change is a complete break from reliance on force.
>
> Those who rely on force may feel that while freedom of action is allowable in ordinary times, in emergency individual conviction must give way to united action in accord with the will of the majority. Yet for one who relies on good will to give up his position at such times is to assume the practical futility of that position. He believes that only by holding to his course, even though force is dominant, can he make his contribution. He believes that unless many individuals persist in times of stress to live by their convictions, necessary changes in the social temper may never occur, and evolution from force to good will may be an idle dream. . . .

"A Different Solution"

> Public officials, when they deal with a sincere conscientious objector, do well to respect his position, for in his own way he is undertaking to make a contribution to human society which must be made if mankind is not to destroy itself by violence. In 1918 the Allies achieved overwhelming victory in the "war to end war." The tragic aftermath of that victory suggests tolerance and respect for those who sincerely and thoughtfully seek a different solution. Most great social advances were begun by a few persons. A wise society will not destroy a minority that, without violence to society, is committed to finding a better way.

Surely, no civilization has ever died out because its defense was weakened by conscientious objectors. The pacific nations of the world, China and India, have had the longest history of all, and India will one day rise again. It is no coincidence that the doctrine of non-violence originated in that ancient land. The real history of the nations of the world is the history of their moral attitudes. A nation that condemns those of its citizens who resolve to *practice* brotherhood is a nation that has condemned itself.

Living Radiance

"Life is light, both are electricity," taught H. P. Blavatsky half a century ago. For some years biologists have known that electrical phenomena are associated with all vital processes. Now a dispatch comes from Washington (Los Angeles *Times,* Sept. 16) relating that Smithsonian Institution scientists have discovered that growing plants emit a red light invisible to the human eye, but which can be studied through special filters which screen out the natural green color of plants. The report describes the researches of Dr. E. D. McAlister and Dr. Jack Myers:

> The red glow of leaves and stems is due to the emission of heat during the process by which plants capture sunlight in the chlorophyll, or green coloring matter, combine the light energy with carbon dioxide from the air and hydrogen from water absorbed through the roots to generate the starches and sugars for growth. From this basic process man obtains his food, coal and oil.
>
> However, not all of the energy from sunlight is utilized by the growing plant. It must reradiate some of it back into the atmosphere as heat in order to prevent burning itself up.
>
> Thus nature has provided a perfect thermostatic control of the process by which life on earth is maintained, Dr. McAlister said.
>
> With their newly devised filters and special apparatus, it has been found that growth of plants can be varied greatly by the amount of

light they receive and that the plants react almost instantaneously to light changes.

The red fluorescence acts automatically with these changes in light intensity, they declared. When photosynthesis, or light absorption, was increased rapidly, the fluorescence increased immediately and when light was flashed suddenly on a plant which had been kept in the dark the red glow flamed in a sudden burst and increased to the necessary point of adjustment of light regulation.

AIDING THE LIFE-PRINCIPLE

The phenomenon of fluorescence in plants, Dr. McAlister comments, "is an obscure but basic law of nature which is extremely complex and is far from being fully understood." A study of *Isis Unveiled* would make the operation of this law much clearer to students of modern biology. H. P. B. writes of the experiments of General Pleasanton, describing how he was able to accelerate the growth of plants by exposing them to an artificial violet light, and quotes from Jacolliot the account of an eastern fakir's power to make seeds grow to full-sized plants in two hours. This, she explains, was caused by the magnetic fluid emanating from the fakir's hands, which

> attracted and concentrated the *akasa,* or life-principle, on the germ. His magnetism, obeying his will, drew up the *akasa* in a concentrated current through the plant towards his hands, and by keeping up an uninterrupted flow for the requisite space of time the life-principle of the plant built up cell after cell, layer after layer, with preternatural activity, until the work was done. The life-principle is but a blind force obeying a controlling influence. In the ordinary course of nature the plant-protoplasm would have concentrated it and directed it at a certain established rate. This rate would have been controlled by the prevailing atmospheric conditions; its growth being rapid or slow, and, in stalk or head, in proportion to the amount of light, heat, and moisture of the season. But the fakir, coming to the help of nature with his powerful will and spirit purified from the contact with matter, condenses, so to speak, the essence of plant-life into its germ, and forces it to maturity ahead of its time (I, 139-40).

The correspondences between this process of stimulation of the rate of growth, and Dr. McAlister's "perfect thermostatic control" that nature has provided to all living things, are clearly evident.

MOTIVES FOR MURDER

Veteran campaigner for prison reform and for the application of social intelligence in the problems of modern penology, Warden

Lewis E. Lawes of Sing Sing prison has added another fine study of crime and the criminal to his already published works. *Meet the Murderer* (Harper & Bros., $3) brings the light of his thirty-five years of experience to bear on a subject which is little understood by the average citizen. The idea that few but hardened criminals are murderers is shown to be a popular fallacy. In the past twenty years, Mr. Lawes relates, 70 per cent of all those who came to Sing Sing for taking human life had never before been in conflict with the law. Of these "law-abiding" criminals, two-thirds committed their crime in a momentary passion. Others among them, however, had motives of pecuniary gain or "divorce by murder." A large proportion of the "first offense" crimes were the work of sex murderers who, Warden Lawes points out, should have been in special institutions in protection of society. Most of these, he says, forewarn of their propensity by some petty sex offense.

Our "Normal" Criminals

These cases of abnormality, however, do not constitute the major problem of America. In a review of "The Effects of Incarceration on the Adult Criminal" (*Mental Hygiene,* January, 1940), Dr. Charles B. Thompson observed that of all the prisoners brought before the Psychiatric Clinic of the New York Court of Special Sessions, "only 1.5 per cent are psychotic, only 2.4 per cent are mentally defective, and but 6.9 per cent are of psychopathic personality." The problem of the criminal, he makes clear, is really a problem of the "normal individual." Nearly half of all those tried in Special Sessions are *first offenders.* In the January, 1939, *Statistical Bulletin* of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., it was shown that only 3 per cent of 500 homicides chosen at random from 1937 killings were underworld gang crimes, while half the murders arose over quarrels about some trifling incident. "Practically all killings arise under the stress of emotions of fear, hatred, anger, jealousy, or greed," the Metropolitan survey finds.

Society Is "Anti-Social"

Dr. Thompson's paper is chiefly concerned with the disintegrating influences of prison life on those who fall victim to a moment of weakness, revealing the almost complete failure of modern society to meet the problem of crime with foresight and understanding. "We assume," he writes, "that the purpose of imprisonment is improvement, as indicated by our applying to it the word 'correction,' but we find that society, through its processes of detention, proceeds in a

direction that is diametrically the opposite." The grim details are plentifully provided in Dr. Thompson's paper. On another occasion he attempted a fundamental diagnosis of the social disease of crime, concluding that the widespread selfishness of modern life is the basic cause. (See THEOSOPHY XXVI, 563.) The remedy, obviously, is moral education of the sort that Theosophy provides. It is not simply the criminal we need to educate, but the population as a whole—*ourselves*.

"YOU HAVE LIVED BEFORE"

Of interest to all Theosophists should be this article by Shaw Desmond, condensed from *Everywoman's*, an English periodical, in the *World Digest* for October. Both title and theme call to mind the reincarnation drama by J. B. Priestley, *We Have Lived Before*. (See THEOSOPHY XXVI, 525 and XXVII, 133, for discussion of this play.) Mr. Desmond endeavors to give vivid illustrations of the fact that each soul returns again and again in the course of rebirths to much the same problems and equations, though aided each time by whatever knowledge has been acquired in the interim. Bringing the theory of reincarnation into suggestive contact with the lives of many individuals, Mr. Desmond introduces his article by an appeal to common experience:

> *Do you believe in reincarnation? Have you ever felt an entire familiarity with some play or person your reason told you you were seeing for the first time? It has happened to many of us.*
>
> I myself, after a quarter of a century's study of the subject of what is called reincarnation, in common with men of science and others, believe that there is behind it a wealth of evidence which appears unshakable.

VISIONS OF PAST LIVES?

He follows this statement with the recounting of a personal and persistent vision of a former life in which he was a Roman gladiator —a vision which offered the theme for his novel, *Echo*. The historical accuracy of the vision is supported by salient facts presented in correlation with his memory of incidents in the former life. While Mr. Desmond's approach to the philosophy of reincarnation is sensational rather than philosophical, appealing to human desire for the bizarre, all such publicity given to the "lost chord" of Christianity helps to open the minds of people who have never considered the idea. Besides this personal testimony, he gives the similar recollec-

tions of other persons. The most striking one concerns a man presumably of Mr. Desmond's acquaintance:

> Mr. Leroy Beaumont, as I will call him, though that is not his real name, from childhood had a horrible dream which returned vividly at intervals. In this dream he is an officer in strange pagan dress and equipment commanding troops at a walled camp by a broad river.
>
> In the dream he enters a house on the river bank where, after killing a spearman on guard, he finds a beautiful woman, whom he drives brutally back to the camp, where she dies of a broken heart.
>
> But always before her death in the dream, she curses him, telling him that one day *"he would wear his uniform as a mockery and would beg to her for food."*

Strange Fulfillment

> I was in New York at the time of "Ben Hur."
>
> To the filming of this great pageant of Roman times came Beaumont, out-of-work, glad, starving as he was, to get a job as "super."
>
> On being handed his costume, he was horror-stricken to note that helmet and shield, kilt and sandals, sword and tunic were identical with those of his nightmare dream.
>
> Returning to England, he was compelled to tramp the roads for work, sinking lower and lower. Walking from Gravesend to Chatham and going down Frindsbury Hill and walking along the river to Rochester, he was astonished to find that he knew every hill and also the site of the "camp," although he had never visited those places before.
>
> Knocking at one door, a fine blonde woman coming to open, he asked her for some food. She gasped, stared at him, and then, with eyes full of hate and horror, told him to "Go away!"
>
> He also stared—for he was looking at the woman of his dreams.

The Perspective of Reincarnation

In conclusion, Mr. Desmond calls for unprejudiced appraisal of the rationality of reincarnation:

> And so I say to each one who may read these words, fact is stranger than fiction—especially in the realms of rebirth. Hope must always be held, from life to life if necessary.
>
> Finally, not only I but some of the world's most distinguished men and women, scientists and others—actors, lawyers, artists, musicians and writers—believe that they *"have lived before."*

The wide currency given to such articles on reincarnation helps to bridge the gap between popular religious conceptions and the principles of Theosophy, leading to a more critical evaluation of sectarian beliefs. To one who has seriously entertained the idea of reincarna-

tion, belief in a personal creator becomes a senseless mockery, while the dreary, materialistic viewpoint of "scientific" rationalism becomes a bitter pill that need no longer be swallowed. But more is needed than the single idea of reincarnation. Inquirers will wish to have important questions answered. Why do not such visions come to all? How are they possible for any man, since the soul must acquire a new brain with each new birth? Only in the teachings of the Great Theosophists can definitive and satisfactory solutions to these problems be found.

A New "Psychology"

In a recent address before a large gathering of psychologists at State College, Pa., Edward Chace Tolman, professor of psychology at the University of California, detailed how, despite world conditions, the broad fundamentals of "psychology" might be made workable today. The long era of childlike hero-worship of "mythical men," sprung from the twin deities Sectarianism and Materialism, has, he implies, outlived its time. He shows our great need today to be a strong fraternal "new religion" for a western world coming of age. From the New York *Times* (Sept. 4, 1940):

> When we no longer preach that the individual must be better than everybody else in all things [said Prof. Tolman], but preach rather the goal of cooperation through his own wants and abilities, then prestige will come to each, not from being better than all others but from being the very best that he himself can be.

Religion of Co-operation

Prof. Tolman enumerates in historical succession four classes of occidental "hero"—the "spiritual man of early Christianity," the intellectual man of the renaissance, the economic man of the industrial era, and the "heroic fellow modeled by the dictators." All these partial ideals are failures. "Where," Prof. Tolman asks, "are we to find a new religion that is as strong as the Protestant religion that was and the new religion of nationalism that is? Such a new religion, with a new set of symbols, a new set of slogans, is needed to put across our education for the harmonious man. It is our task as social psychologists to discover what this religion will be and to make it prevail." He finds the answer in a religion of ethical example, to be set by the leaders of society:

> The primary biological demands of all could be satisfied because of modern technology. The difficulty to date has been that of distribution.
>
> If the leaders but shift their emphasis to the rational and cooperative whole—if we can imbue our children not with the goal of getting

rich but with that of being rationally cooperative human beings—the problem of distribution of material goods will no longer be a problem but a straight-forward task upon which leaders and led will naturally cooperate.

"All men presently follow the example the most excellent men set," Krishna taught in *The Bhagavad-Gita*. Prof. Tolman's panacea is far from being merely a utopian dream.

The Self of All

Using "sacrifice" in its fullest meaning, as inclusive of the whole field and range of the interplay of human energies, he envisions the normal constructive outlets to which the mind, upon changed bases of thought, would naturally direct itself:

> The group satisfactions of sacrifice will also be provided for the masses by all sorts of vocational groups and place-groups in which the individual can immerse himself and relative to which he will be willing to give up some of his primary demands.
>
> And here we come . . . to the question of war. These groups must and will finally stop. Not a nation, a class, a race, whose final and all-consuming competition is with other nations, classes and races, but will reach the idea of *humanity as a whole, with which the individual must identify himself*. (Our italics.)
>
> Thus the harmonious man will also have satisfactions of self-sacrifice for the sake of conquest of an enemy. But these satisfactions will come primarily from our identification with humanity, and not from identification with narrower groups as such.
>
> We must not preach Americans against Germans, against Europeans, against Asiatics, against Africans. On the contrary, we must preach all humanity against diseases and misery and ignorance—against battle, murder and sudden death.

If this be the teaching of modern psychology, then let us have more of it! Theosophists are glad to collaborate in work for the realization of such an ideal, it being identical with their own. Significantly, the pronouncements for universal brotherhood are coming from the ranks of science, and the materialism of the scientific view is slowly being overcome by self-criticism, not by attacks from without. Prof. Tolman may be the forerunner of a moral revolution in the social sciences. Only by adopting his position can these fields of research ever make a fundamental contribution to human betterment.

"The Primitive Streak"

The evolution of physical forms, Theosophy teaches, takes place gradually from a pre-existing basis in finer material, the heterogeneous developing from the relatively homogeneous under the intelligent

guidance of Law. Partial corroboration of this ancient teaching now comes from Dr. George L. Streeter of the Department of Embryology, Carnegie Institute of Washington, who recently told of the discovery of a "bank of primordial protoplasm" in the egg of mammals. (New York *Times,* Oct. 29, 1940.) Heretofore, he said, this "bank" has been known as the "primitive streak," a term in embryology used to designate an opaque line appearing early in the germinal spot of the egg, and assigned to a minor part in the first stages of embryonic growth. Its work in organic development is now better understood. Says Dr. Streeter:

> "One can attribute to the primitive streak the fundamental role of constituting the continuing residuum of the primordial germ plasm, from which specialized cells and cell masses emerge to become various body tissues."
>
> Dr. Streeter showed a rare photograph of the human egg in its single-cell stage and the egg of monkeys at various stages of embryonic development, demonstrating the primitive streak at these various stages and how the embryo draws on its fund in the protoplasmic bank until its capital is exhausted. . . .
>
> "It has been made clear by our researches," Dr. Streeter added, "That in the matter of the primitive streak we are dealing with a 'reservoir of primordial cells,' stemming directly from the original one-celled egg, and that it is these unspecialized cells that are the source of the more specialized and restricted tissues which emerge, segment by segment, as the body of the embryo is laid down."

Organic Architect

This descriptive account of embryotectonic process, though of engrossing interest, still leaves unanswered the question as to *why* a speck of unorganized protoplasm should grow, tissue by tissue and organ by organ, into the complex structure of a human or animal body. The theosophist, however, sees in the "primitive streak," simply a substantial representative of the guiding intelligence in all nature, the material focus for the work of the "master-builder," the "invisible architect," or, as named in Theosophic teaching—the astral body. The outcome of this research demonstrates the validity of the general propositions laid down half a century ago in *The Secret Doctrine:*

> The tendency of modern thought is to recur to the archaic idea of a homogeneous basis for apparently widely different things—heterogeneity developed from homogeneity. Biologists are now searching for their homogeneous protoplasm and chemists for their protyle, while science is looking for the force of which electricity, magnetism, heat, and so forth, are the differentiations (I, 46).